

APPENDIX G

WEMO TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

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Draft WEMO Travel Management Plan Implementation

I. Introduction

In accordance with current Bureau Policy (H-8342.1, Section VI), all Travel Management Plans (TMP) shall include an implementation plan. This implementation plan should include the framework for making final decisions on how each TMP will be designed, operated, and funded. The WEMO Transportation and Travel Management (TTM) implementation plan includes the following elements: Management Objectives, Network Design, Signing, Education, Enforcement, Rehabilitation, Mapping, Maintenance, Monitoring, Adaptive Management, Supplementary Rules, and Funding.

The Implementation Plan will be the guiding document for implementation of the travel network and will provide the plans and procedures to be accomplished relating to route conditions and usage. Further planning decisions and changes may occur in accordance with the Plan Amendment objectives and the objectives of the Travel and Transportation Management TTM plan.

Specific strategies for implementing each TMP will be included in the FEIS, upon selection of the proposed action.

An underlying principle of the WEMO Transportation and Travel Management (TTM) implementation strategy is to promote area-wide plan success. This involves essential elements of the implementation plan coming together into a coordinated framework, so that necessary actionable information is shared between appropriate personnel within BLM as well as partners, and that the actionable information includes appropriate follow-through. An integrated strategy is under development at this time and will be included in the proposed plans. Elements that are part of this strategy are outlined below.

Implementation priorities may vary within each planning area. General priorities are based on the following criteria:

- Public information needs for the route network, including signing, outreach, kiosks, and other identified strategies
- Specific and/or multiple sensitive resources are present and being adversely affected or at risk
- Fiscal and human resources, including partnerships, are available to effectively and efficiently respond to and facilitate compliance
- Strategies have been identified in key implementation plans (e.g. ACEC Plans)
- Access needs are most evident

II. Management Objectives

Various Alternatives are under development to identify key Management Objectives of the WEMO TTM strategy that may include variations across travel management areas. Management Objectives consistent across all TMA are discussed in the following sections.

III. Network Design

Various specific route network design features are under consideration in the various alternatives. Overall Network Design is governed by the following principles:

- Design a system that is coherent, cohesive, and that recognizes and meets current and anticipated access and recreational needs;
- Design a system that can be responsive to new needs as they are identified and new decisions as they are made, without significant redesign;
- Design a system that recognizes and minimizes impacts to sensitive environmental and cultural resources, and that promotes public safety;
- Design a system that is responsive to various types of recreational activities; and

IV. Signing

The WEMO TTM strategy proposes to continue the policy that all open routes shall be signed. Basic principles that will be included in all TMP include:

- Area and public land identification.
- Entry kiosks and informational kiosks.
- Route numbers and the designation status of a route.

Signing will be designed to provide the public with clear and correct information to avoid off-network travel, damage to sensitive resources and areas, to prevent use conflict, and to direct the public to popular destinations. Maintenance procedures and schedules will be developed for signs and markers. This will include anticipated replacement needs.

Specific sign or communication/engineering may include:

- Designated Routes will be marked with brown flexible markers with standard decals.
- “Open” routes will be marked with route identification letters and numbers and arrow decals at intersections and along the route as necessary to indicate routes that are “open” for vehicle travel.
- “Non-Motorized Use Only” and “Non-Mechanized Use Only” routes will be marked with standard symbol decals indicating what mode of transportation is allowed.
- “Limited Use Only” routes will be marked with specific limitation symbol and/or other appropriate information indicating the type of restriction for that route. For example if the route is available to specified vehicles or that the route is available for limited season of use.

V. Education

An outreach and education program will be developed as a tool to facilitate the public education effort and enlist public support and assistance in maintaining the route network. The educational

and outreach program may be developed in collaboration with Federal, state, and county entities, established and emerging organizations and programs, and with public participation, and may include area-specific elements as identified in each TMP.

Key messages to communicate will be developed that reflect the sensitivity of resources in the area, the recreational opportunities the area offers, and the land ethics that are important to follow when utilizing public lands.

Potential Targeted Methods of Communication that can be identified to enhance access to information include:

- Desert Discovery Center and other outreach facilities
- School Presentations and tours promoting the BLM messages and outdoor multiple land uses, land ethics, leading to invitations for field tours;
- Informational Websites, potentially including downloadable items such as: maps, land use ethics, rules, historic and cultural settings, maps, air quality alerts, fire prevention restrictions,;
- Traditional maps, Brochures and Guides

Sustainable partnerships are essential to the successful implementation of the TMPs. These partnerships need to be coordinated, and include organizations that bring various interests and resources to the table, including non-profit and other private groups, governmental jurisdictions and organizations, educational groups, users and user organizations, local law enforcement, utilities and private businesses.

Financial resources for programs need to be identified and pooled with other partners. Programs also need to be prioritized and responsibilities assigned, to ensure sustainability.

VI. Enforcement

Barstow (BFO) and Ridgecrest (RFO) are the primary Field Offices within the BLM's California Desert District that manage the law enforcement operations within the WEMO area. However, certain law enforcement responsibilities within the WEMO area have been assigned to the Palm Springs/South Coast and Needles Field Offices. A brief description of law enforcement (LE) responsibilities is provided for Barstow and Ridgecrest Field Offices followed by a strategy for enforcement within the WEMO area. Within the WEMO route network law enforcement coverage is broken down into patrol sectors. A patrol sector is a geographic area that is assigned to a law enforcement Ranger for patrol, enforcement, and monitoring. The Subregions that fall within each patrol sector are listed along with other identified high value natural resources and other areas that place substantial patrol demands on the law enforcement officer assigned to that sector.

Background

The WEMO Planning area contains a significant number of unique and sensitive resources in its 3.1 million acres of public lands. Forty-five ACECs, including four DWMAs, are located partially or completely in the planning area. Twenty-one designated Wilderness Areas and four designated Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) are also found in the planning area. Six OHV Open

Areas that host hundreds of organized recreational and commercial activities are also found in the planning area.

These multiple resource and recreational values attract a large population located in Southern California and Southern Nevada. The physical and geographic description of the WEMO Planning area can best be described as “the recreation backyard” for over 17 million residents of Southern California, including visitors from Las Vegas, Nevada and areas far away as the Central Valley and urban areas of San Francisco. Within the planning area, the cities of Victor Valley, which combine to total over 600,000 people, the city of Palmdale, population 150,000 and Lancaster, population 160,000, form the largest population centers in the region. These cities are located in the southern and southwestern portions of the planning area.

The southern 2 million acres of the WEMO Planning area is primarily managed by the Barstow Field Office (BFO) and boasts several natural wildlife and archaeological areas; Afton Canyon, Rainbow Basin, Inscription Canyon, Salt Creek Hills, Juniper Flats and Harper Dry Lake. A predominate resident found throughout the area is the Desert Tortoise. The protection and conservation of its habitat is a major consideration in the BFO’s management of public lands under its jurisdiction. In addition to resource protection and conservation, the BFO manages wilderness areas, designated wilderness study areas, and additional forms of multiple uses of desert resources, including the combined largest area of OHV Open Areas in the BLM. Recreational and commercial use opportunities include diverse activities ranging from annual off-highway vehicle events to major motion picture filming.

The portion of the WEMO Planning area that is covered by the BFO is geographically bounded by LA County to the west, Joshua Tree National Park to the southeast, the San Bernardino National Forest to the south, and Fort Irwin National Training Center to the north and the Mojave National Preserve to the east. San Bernardino County is home to over 1.7 million residents, and is the largest county in area within the United States. San Bernardino County land ownership is a pattern of “checkerboard” private, public, and State lands, due to early settlers to the area and expansion of the railroad development in the western United States.

The RFO manages approximately 1.8 million acres of public land within the California Desert District; of which 1.2 million acres are within the WEMO Planning area. Approximately 40% of the lands managed by the RFO are managed as Congressionally designated areas for conservation of wilderness values, including 17 of the 21 designated Wilderness Areas in the Planning Area and two of the four designated Wilderness Study Areas. Also located in the Field Office area are four Off Highway Vehicle areas which draw a significant number of visitors to the area.

The public lands managed by the Ridgecrest Field Office in the Western Mojave Desert are within a transition zone between the West Mojave Desert region and the Sierra, Great Basin and San Joaquin Valley bioregions, which results in the largest concentration of cultural sites in the CDCA. The lands are located in Kern, Inyo, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino Counties. The southern portions of the lands are approximately two hours north of the Los Angeles basin with its 17 million residents. The city of Ridgecrest, located roughly in the center of the area, has a population of roughly 30,000. While much of the planning area has a relatively stable population, due to the Military Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC), the city of Ridgecrest is expected to increase in population over the next five years. The public land ownership pattern is generally large contiguous blocks of public land in the central and northern

regions while in the southern region the land ownership is distinctly a checkerboard pattern with the land ownership being mostly private.

With this large number of residents in the area and its close proximity to the greater Los Angeles and Central Valley areas, Ridgecrest managed public lands host nearly 1 million recreation visits each year. A large number of these visitors recreate at the Spangler Hills, Jawbone, and Dove Springs Off-Highway Vehicle areas. While this represents a significant component of the visitor use, it must be noted that there are another 3000 miles of trails open to “limited use” by motor vehicles throughout the Field Office area. This presents a significant challenge to the law enforcement staff charged with the protection of these public lands.

Patrol

Law enforcement patrols within the WEMO planning area will be conducted and reported by patrol sector. The Subregions have been aligned with the patrol sectors. Law enforcement issues are documented in the law enforcement (IMARS) reporting system. The IMARS reporting system is a confidential law enforcement reporting system that is not publically available. The Chief LE Rangers provide reports from IMARS to their respective Field Managers. These reports allow each Field Manager and Chief Ranger to review the frequency of patrol and types of incidents documented in order to collaboratively monitor and direct further patrol and law enforcement activities.

Inter-disciplinary Management

In an effort to enforce the WEMO route network, interdisciplinary cooperation among staff is stressed. As part of this interdisciplinary team approach LE Rangers work closely with resource, recreation, and maintenance staff to capture information, statistics and maintenance needs and specific locations. Once trends or needs are assessed, the Field Managers prioritize resources and direct additional LE patrol in specific Subregions as needed.

Law enforcement patrol efforts are both proactive and preventive along with being responsive to complaints. Patrols are conducted on a periodic basis depending on priorities throughout the planning area. Patrols are prioritized based on factors such as public safety, resource protection, and public use patterns

Goals for a successful enforcement plan include:

- Improve upfront information on the nature, timing, and location of problems to utilize better preventive strategies and result in more effective and timely law enforcement response.
- Increase the presence of non-BLM law enforcement, other staff and volunteers to increase the effectiveness of BLM law enforcement in the area. Improve and expand interagency cooperation in the area.
- Increase enforcement capacity, including the use of new technology, modelling, and specific strategies to be used by BLM law enforcement.
- Encourage educational and monitoring efforts by volunteer user groups and citizen-based education groups, which can increase law enforcement educational efforts.

VII. Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of transportation linear disturbances and disturbed areas would be accomplished in a phased fashion and may include the following:

- 1) Signing and otherwise clarifying the open route network;
- 2) Removal of foreign debris and trash or other off-route attractants;
- 3) Raking or otherwise disguising with materials at hand the closed routes;
- 4) Ripping compacted soil and seeding with a native seed mixture;
- 5) Planting native or dead vegetation;
- 6) Placement of closed signs in appropriate locations, and
- 7) Placing hardened barriers, fencing, or appropriate gates in the area to prevent impacts to the rehabilitation site.

Vegetation growing in the path of new primitive roads or trails developed under authorization maybe salvaged and relocated to routes or other disturbed lands in the immediate area or other areas in need of such vegetation as determined by the BLM.

VIII. Mapping

Mapping may include both traditional hard copy maps that are provided through BLM and non-BLM outlets and partners, and electronic media versions. These may include downloadable maps that can be utilized by an electronic device, web-downloadable maps and interactive maps from the BLM or non-BLM sites that provide information on such features as specific destination, trailheads, campsites or other items of importance and interest to the viewing public.

IX. Maintenance

Maintenance will include a regular program of sign replacement and monitoring and reporting by staff that provides for timely replacements and documentation of other maintenance needs. Most routes in the network do not include regular maintenance requirements. Routes that do include such requirements will be identified and put into the Recreation Management Information System (RIMS) and/or Facility Asset Management System (FAMS) to assure appropriate funding can be provided.

X. Monitoring

The BLM will implement a monitoring and evaluation program for the area to identify and address ongoing and emerging issues that may adversely impact the resource and/or visitor experience. The data monitoring will evaluate implementation progress and the effectiveness of the Plan in achieving desired outcomes and conditions as well as identify adaptive measures should adverse impacts or changing conditions be discovered. The monitoring effort shall identify specific actions, including timeframes, methods, and anticipated resource needs for

environmental monitoring. The monitoring program will evaluate:

- If recreation objectives are being met;
- Use patterns and volumes;
- Condition of roads and trails and the condition of public use areas, and
- Compliance with planned designations and use restrictions

Limits of Acceptable Change indicators, or triggers, requiring adjustments to this management plan will be identified based on the above monitoring and evaluation factors and may address:

- Effectiveness of closure, signing, and rehabilitation efforts.
- Effectiveness of stopping, parking and camping strategies utilized to minimize impacts from recreation and travel use of the network.
- Priority/Special Status species habitat conditions resulting from recreation or travel impacts.
- Cultural site condition and vandalism resulting from recreation or travel impacts or access.
- Riparian condition trend resulting from recreation or travel impacts.
- Watershed condition trend resulting from recreational or travel impacts.
- Visitor safety issues.

Some features of the monitoring plan may include:

- Photo-monitoring. For priority areas, photo monitoring points will be documented using GPS and a monitoring schedule will be established;
- The monitoring data collected will be used to assess the effectiveness of the plan and associated implementation actions, and identify adaptive management strategies;
- The route network would be monitored for indications of new proliferation and “Closed” routes would be monitored for indications of use every three years using aerial photography;
- Additional route network monitoring would be conducted in association with signing and rehabilitation activities;
- The plan area will be monitored for signing condition and replacement.
- Rehabilitated routes will be monitored to determine effectiveness of measures;
- Upland health assessments will be conducted as warranted;
- Riparian health assessments will be conducted for areas that are impacted by the network; and
- Digital data will be created and stored to document conditions and monitoring activities.

XI. Adaptive Management

Adaptive measures will be implemented on an appropriate area-wide basis based on the evaluation factors and threshold identified in the monitoring plan, specific on-the-ground factors that indicate a substantive need, unknown information that becomes available at a later date in time, and new opportunities and partnerships that are established. Appropriate area of application may be planning area, travel management area, or subregion, based on the data collected and the adaptive management approach identified. Records of TMA-specific or subregion-specific strategies and their success will be documented to establish long-term trends in overall effectiveness of the plan.

The inventories for this project have identified almost 15,000 miles of routes in the planning area. This is over 7,200 miles of additional on-the-ground linear features (aka routes) identified through the 2012 field monitoring and aerial photo review that had not been addressed, but appear to have been identifiable at the time of the 2006 WEMO Plan. The WMRNP conducted a complete inventory of the planning area in 2012-2013 to provide a useful baseline for analysis and implementation of the adopted strategies and network. A designation determination was made on each route in the inventory, based on the designation criteria, alternative goals and objectives, and the analysis of impacts.

The 2006 WEMO Plan indicated that some features could not be located on the ground (10-13%). As monitoring proceeds, additional information will verify the existence and condition of the routes in the 2012-2013 inventory. If linear features in the WMRNP inventory show evidence of natural rehabilitation and are not readily apparent to the casual passerby on-the-ground, they may be removed from the inventory. If linear features are found on the ground that show signs of use but were missed in the inventory process, and through document review can be determined to have existed at the time of initial project development they will be added to the route system, and evaluated through the route designation process to determine whether they should be designated as available for use or not.

Additionally on newly acquired lands, transportation linear features would be inventoried and designation would comply with applicable federal regulations and statutes, and be incorporated into the overall route implementation process. New route networks on acquired lands would be required to facilitate conservation programs and be complimentary to the network resulting from alternative implementation.

Finally, as additional information becomes available within the WEMO Plan Area, the BLM will manage the designated routes for the protection of cultural and natural resources, including desert tortoise. As areas of resource conflicts are identified via monitoring and future inventory activities, the BLM will continue to evaluate the designated road and trail network, to ensure it continues to meet the objectives of 43 CFR 8340, the applicable land use plan goals and objectives, and applicable laws and regulations. The network will be reviewed to assess its effectiveness at meeting current travel management objectives and at addressing current and changing land use plan goals and objectives. Adaptive management may include changes in the adopted travel management system or measures to avoid on-site and off-site effects on current and future land uses and important resources; among others, issues include noise and air pollution, erodible soils, stream sedimentation, nonpoint source water pollution, listed and sensitive species habitats, historic and archeological sites, wildlife, special management areas, and recognition of property rights for adjacent landowners. Route designations or other actions in this plan could be modified based on monitoring results, or to accommodate land use proposals. All required clearances and analyses would precede needed modifications to the transportation

and travel management plan.

XII. Supplementary Rules

Following approval of the proposed plan Supplementary Rules may be developed in accordance with 43 CFR 8365-1.6 as determined necessary to implement the plan.